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Lee Harvey Oswald

[Image]

Note: The material in this section is comprised of abstracts made available at the COPA conference, fortified (so to speak) by the approximately twelve hours of tape recordings made by Fair Play at various presentations over the weekend.

Indented material is from the abstract of a presenter. Quotations within, unless indicated otherwise, are the presenter's comments made at the COPA conference.

Lee Harvey Oswald---a U.S. Intelligence Agent: The Evidence

Presentation by Hal Verb

"Let me begin by first making a couple of quotations," Hal Verb began, adding that collecting quotations was something of a hobby for him. "There are two: 'We see what we see because we miss all the finer details,'...and 'There is only one thing that moves government on any level, and that is utter, stark fear.'" The first quotation was attributed to someone who was unintelligible on my tape recording, unfortunately---although Mr. Verb added that the man was the founder of general semantics. The second is by the late William Kunstler.

"I'm talking about the fear when they see the people mobilized, who have truth on their side, and then do something about it," Verb continued. "That's why I'm here [at COPA], and I hope that's why you're here."

Verb said, before getting to the body of his talk, that he did not know Lee Harvey Oswald, but Oswald knew of him, at least indirectly. Verb said in the early sixties, he---Verb---participated in distributing a Fair Play for Cuba Committee pamphlet, "Cuban Counter-revolutionaries in the United States," that Oswald ordered through the mail. Verb added that he used to write for The Militant and was a member and organizer of the New Jersey chapter of the FPCC.

"Many of the theories that are bandied about say that [Oswald] was an agent of the FBI or the CIA...but I say he was an agent of the ONI...Office of Naval Intelligence...Since the Marine Corps is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Navy, and since his Marine Corps discharge was handled by the Navy, there's no way that you can have this discharge, and his

conduct---before, during and after---unless the ONI started it."

This association of Oswald, however, with ONI, does not by any means prove or disprove that if there were a conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy it follows that ONI is directly involved in that conspiracy. It can be argued, however, that a failure to completely uncover and thoroughly understand this Oswald-ONI relationship would, without doubt, prevent us from reaching any final conclusions as to the nature of the conspiracy: no other avenue of pursuit is possible unless this fact is recognized.

Why is ONI singled out rather than the traditional and usual "spy" agencies (such as the CIA or FBI) when Oswald's intelligence links are cited? ...The argument can be offered that drawing attention to such agencies as the CIA and FBI provides an exercise in futility where these agencies become mere "whipping boys" frustrating serious attempts to unravel the truth of Oswald's ONI association, in a real sense, then, a cover-up of a cover-up.

There are three distinct and substantive reasons to conclude that Oswald was an ONI agent. Of these three the first is logical and quite apparent and the other two relate to my own personal and direct experiences in tracking down, examining and analyzing the data in Oswald's short-lived career as an intelligence agent.

The first of these reasons is, in my view, an obvious one. I would cite here what the American philosopher Alfred Whitehead's observation that "it takes an unusual mind to see the obvious." What is "obvious" here applies to the necessary fact that while Oswald was in the Marine Corps if there were any questions arising during his tour of duty about his "conduct" during (and after) his Marine Corps service it would come automatically to the attention of the ONI. That is because [as noted] the Marine Corps is under the jurisdiction of the Navy Department. Oswald's "discharge" status, thus, involved ONI vis-a-vis the Marine Corps and US Navy branches.

The other two reasons involving my own experiences occurred in 1965 and 1966. The latter date I will cite here as it relates more directly to the first reason discussed above: Oswald's ONI links principally those immediately before his release from the Marine Corps.

> In December 1966 I appeared on a radio interview program in Oakland, California together with Harold Weisberg, the noted author of many books on the JFK case. At the very end of the show a caller, who would not identify himself, phoned in and wanted to speak with Weisberg. By happenstance I was able to hear what the caller had to say. Some of what the caller discussed is mentioned in Weisberg's Oswald in New Orleans (p. 87) [p. 85 in the Canyon Books edition---Ed.] but not all...

"He [the caller] engaged in a recreational activity which I'm not going to mention, because it gives a clue as to who he is," Verb told his rapt COPA audience. "At least who I think he---who I've tracked down---think he is. In fact I tracked him down. I refused to give his name to any individual, and I finally gave his name to Harold Weisberg yesterday [October 21, 1995, presumably---Ed.] in a handwritten note. I did not want to put this in the form of a letter, or even mention his name. When Harold saw it, he said, 'That name seems familiar.' Now, I don't know what he's going to do with it. But, I have tracked this person down."

> Essentially, the caller, who was stationed at El Toro Marine Corps base when Oswald was there, knew Oswald and was a barracks roommate of his. Oswald, he asserted, had a "crypto clearance" and during Oswald's remaining two weeks before receiving his "hardship" discharge was constantly in the base's "C.I.D." (Criminal Investigation Division) HQ being "briefed" for a "mission." As we all know, Oswald went to Russia [right after his discharge]. The caller maintained that Oswald was "set up with a specific discharge" and that the "crypto" work involved "black box" stuff. According to the caller, Oswald worked in decoding "IFF" (Identification of Friend of Foe) aircraft. The caller said there were about 180 individual assigned to the unit and five were classified. Thus, Oswald had to be one of these five.

"Now, the obvious implication is that Oswald was on a mission," Verb stated, "as an agent of the ONI. Now, like I say, I tracked down that person---and that's one of the reasons---that's my personal experience with showing that he is an agent."

> In testimony before the ARRB (the presidential Assassination Records and Review Board) in Dallas, November 1994, I cited this particular 1966 call and urged the Board to review this matter and interview not only those in the CID but also the ONI as well. I pointed out that if Oswald were briefed by the CID it could not escape the notice and attention of the ONI. To date (July 1995) there is no indication or prospect that the ARRB has or will look

into this but, at least, now it is a matter of historical record. [Note: The ARRB is not an investigative body---Ed.]

The second (personal) reason noted above deals with an event in 1965. A friend, knowing of my deep interest in the JFK case, gave me a record he found at a record store. This record, which I still own, is extremely rare (I've seen only one other copy) and was made around 1964. It is called The President's Assassin Speaks, and has Oswald's actual voice during a radio debate he had with Ed Butler (and others) in New Orleans, August 21, 1963. Produced by "Key Records" in Los Angeles, it is an anti-communist propaganda production of Dr. Billy James Hargis, founder and director of "The Christian Crusade." Naming Oswald as the assassin, the record strives mightily to link Owald with an (implied) communist conspiracy. If you listen to this record, the back of the record assures us, "you will be able to decide for yourself who gave the orders to Oswald to take the life of President Kennedy."

My interest in this record, however, was not the propaganda content but rather in a discovery I made of a "slip" Oswald made on that tape while defending his stay in Russia as a "defector." Oswald "slipped" and stated he "was under the protection of the American government," quickly recovering from his "slip" and then saying he was "not under" that protection.

"When I heard that record, I went ballistic. Of course, in those days you didn't use the term 'ballistic.' But I did go ballistic. I said, my God! The guy has slipped and made an admission---to me---which represents that he is representing the U.S. Government!...

"So I immediately went to the [Warren Commission] volumes...and they left out the part where he says 'I was under the protection of---' and they leave in the 'I was not under the protection of.'

"I just spoke recently to John Newman and I said, 'You know, John, why did you publish in your book, Oswald and the CIA---I'm a stickler for details. I mean, I probably find errors in virtually all the books, it's just something I do because I want to get the record straight---I said, 'Why did you publish that?' And he said, 'Hal, I just didn't know about that.' Of course, he's learned about it. So, all he did was reprint what's in the volumes. But the volumes didn't get it straight. You start questioning, why didn't the volumes publish it? That's another story."

Forgetting for the moment [that] the Warren Commission

"transcript" did not print Oswald's "slip," for myself, it again offered a clear and strong indication that Oswald was, indeed, a U.S. intelligence agent whose assignment was his stay in Russia. In summary for the three main reasons cited above the evidence is sufficient, compelling and substantive: Lee Harvey Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent engaged in various activities at home (the U.S.) and abroad beginning with his Marine Corps discharge and ending with his death at the hands of Jack Ruby.

As to the final question of the nature of the conspiracy: Unravelling Oswald's intelligence connections provides the key. The answer or answers lie staring us in the face if only we would truly look! As the noted philiosopher Wittgenstein so well counseled us, "Look---and then think!"